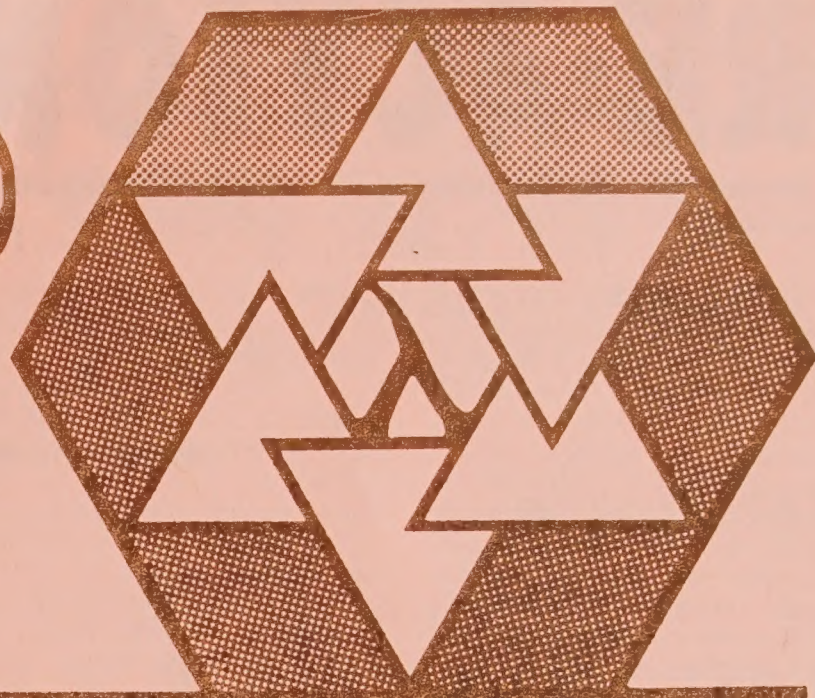


THE JEWISH GAILY

FORWARD

NEWS MAGAZINE OF
SHA'AR ZAHAV

THE CONGREGATION OF
THE GOLDEN GATE



Vol. 2

Box 2107 San Francisco, Ca. 94126

November 1977

Book 2

Heshvan/Kislev 5738

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ON

NOV. 4th

WE MOVE

TO

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32

PAGE ST.

At Market



FREE PARKING

1-10

RE-ACTION

OCTOBER 20, 1977

EDITOR, SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER
FIFTH AND MISSION
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

DEAR EDITOR:

THE CONGREGATION OF SHA'AR ZAHAV WISHES TO EXPRESS GREAT DISMAY THAT YOU FAILED TO CONVEY THE PRESENCE OF A STRONG SISTERHOOD IN OUR NEWLY FORMING CONGREGATION.

WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT MEN STARTED THE SYNAGOGUE THEY WERE AWARE FROM THE BEGINNING THAT IT COULD NOT BE A GAY SYNAGOGUE WITHOUT THE FULL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN.

IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT ALTHOUGH YOUR REPORTER INTERVIEWED WOMEN, SHE DID IGNORE THE FACT THAT THE WOMEN PARTICIPATED IN SUCH SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AS THE READING OF THE TORAH ON YOM KIPPUR, THE HOLIEST DAY OF THE JEWISH YEAR. ON A MORE REGULAR BASIS, WOMEN-ON THE FINANCE COMMITTEE, WOMEN-SPEARHEADING THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE AND THE VOICES OF WOMEN-LEADING THE CONGREGATION IN AGE OLD JEWISH PRAYERS AND SONG IS NOT UNCOMMON.

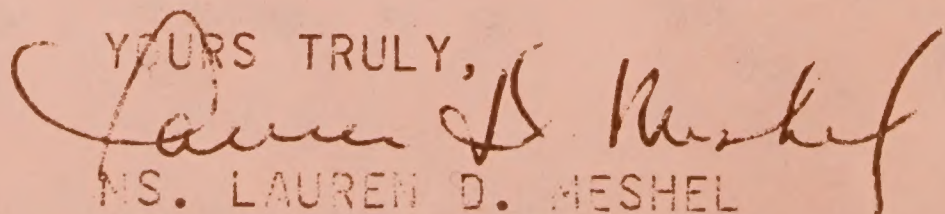
THE CONGREGATION IS COMPOSED OF LESBIANS AND GAY MEN WHO ARE WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE THIS RARE SITUATION IN WHICH WE CAN AFFIRM BOTH OUR JEWISHNESS AND OUR GAYNESS.

WE WRITE BECAUSE WE ARE JEWISH AND WE ARE LESBIANS AND GAY MEN. WE ARE NOT TO BE IGNORED. WE ARE NO LONGER INVISIBLE TO EACH OTHER AND WE EXPECTED TO BE RECOGNIZED IN ANY OTHER COVERAGE BY YOUR NEWSPAPER.

WE ASK YOU TO PRINT THIS TO LET OTHER JEWISH LESBIANS, GAY MEN, AND THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS KNOW THAT THERE IS A PLACE FOR THEM IN THE BIRTHING OF OUR SYNAGOGUE. WE ARE MEETING TEMPORARILY AT GLIDE, ELLIS AND TAYLOR, FRIDAY AT 7:30PM.

AMEN!

YOURS TRULY,



MS. LAUREN D. MESHTEL

AND THE CONGREGATION OF SHA'AR ZAHAV

Band of Brothers: The City's gay synagogue

By Bea Pixa

"HAVE come here for Shabbat — for rest not only from breadwinning, but also from the effort of appearing straight in a straight world. To rest from the effort of pretending to be what I am not. It can be hard to keep a straight face in a straight world."

The poignant declaration of vulnerability and faith was reverently intoned by the group that circled the basement of Glide Methodist Church.

It's not that "old time religion" being expressed at Congregation Sha'Ar Zahav on Friday nights, the start of the Jewish sabbath. It's something old, something new, something borrowed and, in the eyes of some traditionalists, something too blue to even be considered a religious experience.

The synagogue, founded by and for gays, is one of the newest entries to The City's expanding list of spiritual anomalies. Less remarkable than the existence of a gay synagogue is the fact that it's taken so long to manifest in a city where homosexuals, it is estimated, comprise up to 20 per cent of the population.

Established in July, it follows the lead of gay congregations already active in Chicago, Boston, Los Angeles, Miami and New York, and distributes a newsletter to its mailing list of 500, irreverently titled "The Jewish Gaily Forward."

Sha'Ar Zahav, which translates as "temple of the Golden Gate," a reference to the coming of the Messiah, is a controversial house of worship. Its ads were initially refused by the Jewish Bulletin, the local Jewish newspaper,

then finally carried when pressure was brought to bear by supporting members of the "straight" community, which includes writers Paul Jacobs and Herbert Gold.

Among local Jewish leaders, the presence of the synagogue has obviously created discomfort. Several rabbis refused comment of any kind, while a few others gracefully suggested that we speak to others who would know more about the subject.

Rabbi Morris Hershman, director of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, reflects the liberal opinion of Reform Judaism and finds no difficulty accepting a gay synagogue. Throughout history, he points out, there have been houses of worship that have attracted specialized segments of the community. "In the United States," he continues, "we try to organize synagogues that are all-embracing, but a specialized group may organize. In Hollywood, for example, there's a synagogue for members of the performing arts."

Though Biblical injunctions against homosexuality are clear-cut, Hershman points out that "there are Biblical injunctions against many things which are not observed. Biblical cult worship patterns are no longer common either. The Bible calls for animal sacrifice, which is not practiced these days, and for many other things which are not practiced. It's unfair to interpret one thing very strictly and others not so strictly."

The Conservative Jewish viewpoint on homosexuality, according to Rabbi Marvin Goodman of United Synagogues of America, remains undefined. However, Orthodox Rabbi Jacob Traub

of Congregation Adath Israel, minces no words. He considers a homosexual house of worship unnecessary, "because they could find their way within the organized congregations that already exist." Homosexuality, he adds, is one of the "prohibited practices of the Torah, and the Torah is the guideline of Jewish life." Even so, he continues, Orthodox Judaism "does not shun these people or encourage them to forsake Judaism, but we see no need for them to continue with a congregation specifically set up to exist outside the boundaries of Jewish law."

Congregation Sha'Ar Zahav functions as a social center, a spiritual base and a forum for topical opinions. The founding members, ever mindful of the tenuous nature of the synagogue's non-profit status, insist the discussions included in the services are not about politics, but about "human rights" and "education." (A recent talk given by gay political activist Jim Foster concerned Jewish attitudes toward homosexuals in Dade County, and led to a discussion of the anti-gay initiative by Republican Sen. John Briggs in Sacramento.)

The synagogue was founded by a trio of men who prefer to remain anonymous, because they fear reprisal in their workaday world. One of the men is already widely recognized as an out-of-the-closet homosexual and is a frequent contributor to a gay publication in addition to his job as a stockbroker. Another is an administrator in a medical program, and a third teaches at a private school. They, and members of the congregation, take turns conducting the services.

Bernard, one of the founders, was apparently unable to find adequate spiritual expression within the Conservative Jewish tradition in which

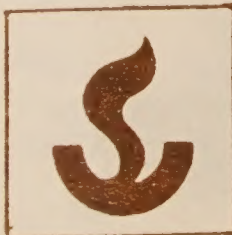
he was reared. His spiritual crisis came 10 years ago when he approached his rabbi to discuss his homosexuality, "and he answered, 'Look, we have a nice young adult program on Thursday nights. Come in — you'll meet a nice Jewish girl.'" It was then, says Bernard, that "I realized I couldn't change him or change myself, but I was still a Jew. I couldn't be part of the community and live a lie." Now separated from the Jewish mainstream, he answers those who question his departure with, "When your congregation is willing to say *mazel tov* to two men on their 10th anniversary together, then I'll come to services there."

Services are an eclectic mix of traditions ranging from prayers in English and Hebrew to Chassidic-type dancing and singing and a social hour at the conclusion. A marked departure from tradition (money is usually not handled on the Sabbath) is the passing of a basket for donations.

The prayer book's cover emblem is rich in symbolism for gays and Jews. One triangle that forms the Star of David is pink, commemorating the badge gays wore in concentration camps. The other triangle is blue. Their point of convergence is lavender, a traditionally gay color, and in the center of the star is the Greek letter, lambda, another gay symbol.

The founders hope that the congregation will grow, prosper, and be able to afford its own rabbi. To those Jews who question its existence, Bernard responds in the time-honored Jewish manner — answering a question with a question: "Can you explain what it is for somebody to be a Jew?" he asks. "How then, can I explain what it is to be gay and why I need a special place for worship?"

32 Page St.



"TO BE A JEW IS A DESTINY"

Vicki Baum - (1888-1961)

ACTION

Report

SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

As ad hoc moderator of the Social Action Committee, I have been attending the meetings of the Bay Area Coalition against the Briggs Initiative (BACABI) and its Religious Concerns Committee. Tal'Or Shank has also been attending. The main thrust of the Religious Concerns Committee has been to prepare to meet the inevitable attacks which will be mounted by the Briggs camp on religious grounds. To that end, the Committee is seeking to line up main-line religious support for the statewide "Speak-out" against the initiative planned for December, and to marshal that support for the rest of the campaign as needed. A mailing is going to be sent to clergy throughout the Bay Area and Northern California soliciting endorsement of a Statement of Conscience which is to be published in full-page advertisements in newspapers around the state if Briggs succeeds in placing his initiative on the ballot.

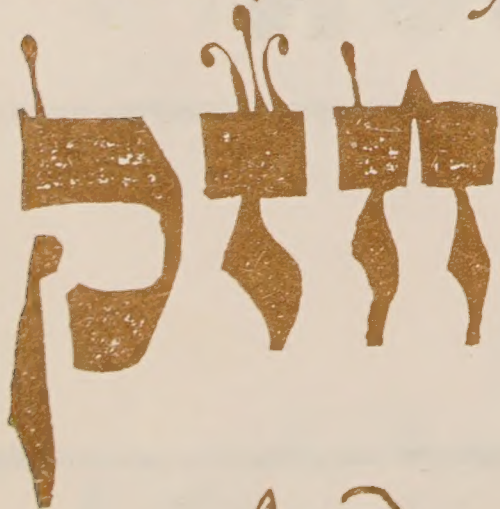
32 Page St.

Apparently, a court challenge to the initiative has been filed. If it succeeds, we can all breathe easier for a while. If it fails, and the initiative reaches the ballot, we are all in for a long, miserable campaign. We will urgently need volunteers to participate in all aspects of the campaign, and particularly we will need people who will participate in a speakers program. It is vitally important for the community to reach out to main-line churches and synagogues to meet this challenge head-on. One of the most effective ways will be by providing speakers whenever we get an opportunity to address straight congregations. If you are interested in volunteering for any aspect of the campaign, and particularly for speaking engagements, please call me at home: 929-0162. (Evenings)

Everyone in the congregation is urged to participate in this committee. Please let me know if you are interested and what other areas of concern we should address. As soon as there is enough business (and participants), we will hold a meeting to organize more formally and elect a permanent moderator. In the meantime, please pray that the California Supreme Court find the wisdom to strike down the initiative!!

ROB MONTAGUE

CHAZAK, Be strong!



4.2



Back from under the rock

Thanks -giving

Much pleasure we derive from eating the turkey;
symbol of this day we all celebrate.
Thanksgiving, built by the Pilgrims as an American tradition,
to be followed by us, citizens of this country,
well aware of our Jewish heritage,-
proud to be an American Jew, to sit in peace
at the thanksgiving table and enjoy the abundance
of food we enjoy in this country of ours.
Some have more to be thankful for, some have less;
but all of us give thanks for something on this day.

We are thankful to live in this free country,
in this State and in this City; to be part
of a free people, a nation so great;
to freely exchange ideas with others,
to assemble in brotherhood at Sha'ar Zahav
to practice our religion, with our gay sisters and brothers,
in peace and dignity, crowned by the congregations' success.
Where we start to build our own Jerusalem in the diasporah,
irregardless of the clouds presented on our path.

Thanksgiving is this time of the year
when yellow leaves or even none hang from the trees,
When the weather gets cold, and winter is near;
and in retrospect we count our blessings-
seeing the sun rise in the morn, and set at night-
counting the endless stars high above-
motionless in time, as the moon climbs.
All this and more we gratefully acknowledge,
and whole heartedly exclaim: "Thank You God, Thank You God".

RALPH

LITERATI

For Marshall

I wanted to sit at your feet
as you stood
shadow along behind as you walked
join you in chant as you spoke.

32 Page St.

You know you belong to the soil,
you will be buried deep in the earth
and your bones powder

You know;
you fear not.

Does your humility masquerade as undeservingness?
Let me tell you, man to man,
you deserve all the love
of us who dance and sing and pray
who conjure for divinity
on the grounds
of your calm acceptance
of martality.

Richard Stone.

PERSONALS

Apt to share - 2bdrm. secure, renovated Vict., laundry, parking avail,
w/w carpet, large bay windows, Duboce Triangle area of
upper Market. Near all major trans.

132.50 mnth & util 1st & last

I am looking for a male or female to share a living space with. I am
25, single male. Slightly left, ritualistically Jewish, semi vegetarian
spiritual, entrepreneur. I've been in S.F. 2yrs. I have spent some
time in Israel and would like to improve my Hebrew. I hope to create
a supportive home environment..... Gerry Tel:552-2721

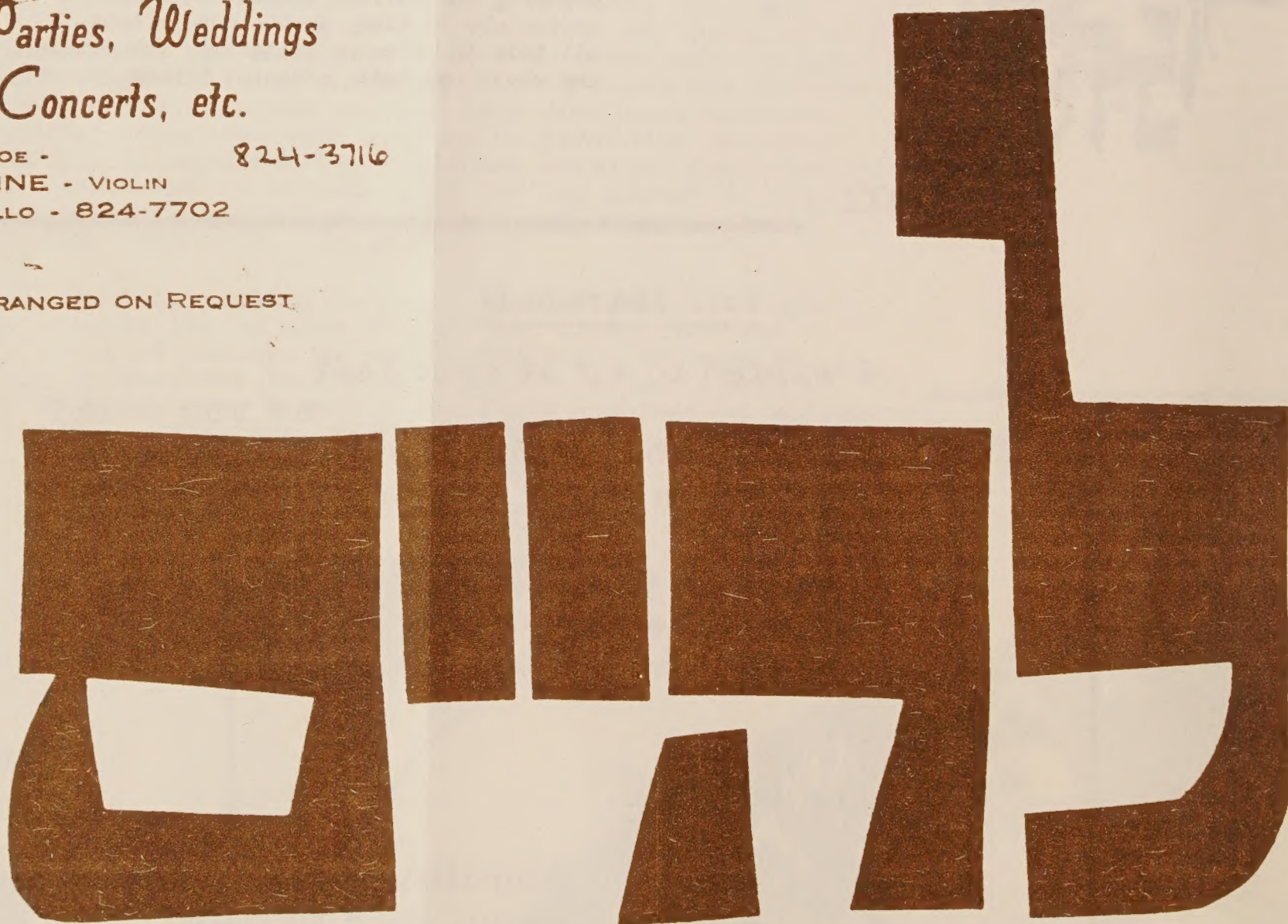
Ori a Sabra is giving conversational Hebrew lessons (Class)
call him at 567-5412

*Music for Parties, Weddings
Informal Concerts, etc.*

ROD - OBOE - 824-3716
YVONNE - VIOLIN
DAN - CELLO - 824-7702

ANY MUSIC ARRANGED ON REQUEST

32 Page St.



"Some Nazis surrounded an old Jew and asked - "Who is responsible
for the War?" "The Jews" answered the old Jew, and then
added...and "the cyclists". "Why the cyclists?" asked the
puzzled Nazis. "WHY THE JEWS?" answered the old Jew.



"When a poor person eats a chicken, one of them is sick!
anon.

THANK YOU

Tom, George, Anne. Saul, Alan, Zev,
Maida, Lauren, Terrific Graphics,
Lou Greene

NEEDED

Writers, Reporters, Artists, Folders,
Stampers, and Stuffers for your own
beloved Gaily Forward!

P.S. Our special Woman's issue has
been postponed until the Jan. issue, so
there is still time to submit articles
poems, stories, prayers
and pictures. SO LET'S
DO IT! to Shamir

INFO.

The INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF GAY JEWS will be hosted by our
L.A. sibling Beth Chayim Chadishim
It will be in May of 1978 so keep it in
mind. more info later. The last
Conference (the second) was hosted by
Beth Simchat Torah in N.Y. and was a
great success. I'm sure we will be well
represented.

MAY 19-21, 1978

IMPORTANT

DEC. 2 FRI. at 32 Page

After SHABBAT SERVICES

OPEN MEETING TO CREATE OUR STRUCTURE

This is it! Please please reserve this date. It will be our
symbolic Bar/Bat Mitzvah our growth from adolescence
to maturity. We will discuss infrastructure, elections, & our Future

7. 11

SHABBAT



NOVEMBER/HESHVAN

- 4- at (32 Page St) Israeli Music, and Dance
Torah port. Hayye Sarah. Gen. 23;1-25:18 Prophetic Reading 1 Kings
1:1 31 ONEG Henry Shane- Att. "Law and the Single Person"
- Kislev- 11- at (32 Page St) Shmoozing etc. T.P. Toldot, Gen 25:19-28:9 P.R.
Malachi 1:1- 2:7
- 18- at (32 Page St) Peter Goodman- On Sex education in the public
schools, and teaching Homosexuality as an alternate lifestyle.
T.P. Va Yetze Gen. 8:10-32:3 P.R. Hosea 12:13-14:10
- 25- at (32 Page St) post Thanksgiving Shmmo have a nice one!
T.P. Va Yishlach Gen. 32:4 P.R. Hosea 11:7-12:12



DECEMBER SECOND : Remember and keep this day, for upon this
day we will conduct our first OPEN MEETING We need a basic
structure, and this is the time to discuss our Direction.



Graphics: Del, Lawrence Kushner
Editor: Shamir
Staff: Rob, Hy, Alan



For post Thanksgiving- on slimming "If nature had intended our
skeletons to be visible it would have put them on the outside of
our bodies!

Elmer Rice (1892-1967)